

REMARKS

By way of summary, Claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 were pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 9, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Beyer et al. (US 6,127,597, hereafter "Beyer"). Claims 10, 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beyer. Claims 16 and 17 were objected to regarding certain 35 U.S.C. 112 informalities. In this Amendment, Claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 16 and 17 have been amended and Claims 12-13 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 16 and 17 have been amended in response to the rejections in order to expedite prosecution, and to more clearly define the structure of the subject matter for which protection is sought. Claims 25 and 26 have been added. The Applicant respectfully submits that each of these amendments is supported by the specification, drawings, or original claim limitations and does not add new matter. The Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as previously pending are patentably distinguished over the cited references or any combination thereof. Accordingly, Applicant reserves the right to pursue the previously unamended claims or claims of broader scope at a later date. Thus, Claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 16, 17, 25 and 26 are pending for consideration in light of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

The Beyer Reference

Beyer discloses a balloon fixture (also called an expandable intramedullary fixture) 80 comprising a balloon 82 and an inflation tube 88. Col. 26, line 64 – Col. 27, line 9. Figures from Beyer are provided below for the Examiner's convenience:

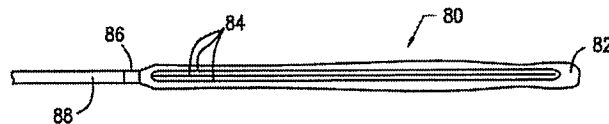


FIG. 6

Figs. 7A-7D show the use of balloon fixture 80 in fixating fractured bone 42 through a hole 45 at an end of the fractured bone 42.

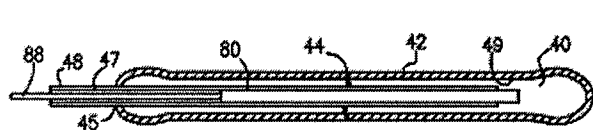


FIG. 7A

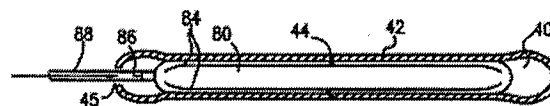


FIG. 7C

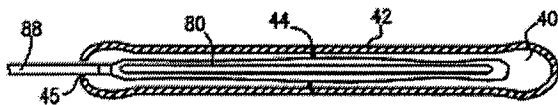


FIG. 7B

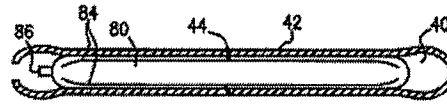


FIG. 7D

The Beyar device involves inserting the balloon 82, filling it with a solidifying fluid “to fixate the bone” and removing the inflation tube 88: “As shown in FIG. 7D, after balloon 82 has been filled and the fluid has at least partly solidified, inlet port 86 is sealed shut, and tube 88 is withdrawn. Within a short time, the solidified fluid fully hardens, anchoring fixture 80 in place and fixating bone 42.” Col. 28, lines 1 – 5. The balloon 82 acts as an implant with a hardened medium contained inside of it, and is left in the bone 42.

The Amended Claims are not anticipated nor rendered obvious by Beyar

At least Figs. 1A and 1B, which show a non-limiting embodiment as claimed in at least independent Claims 1, 10 and 16, read on the elected invention of the present application. A copy of Figs. 1A and 1B from the present application is provided below:

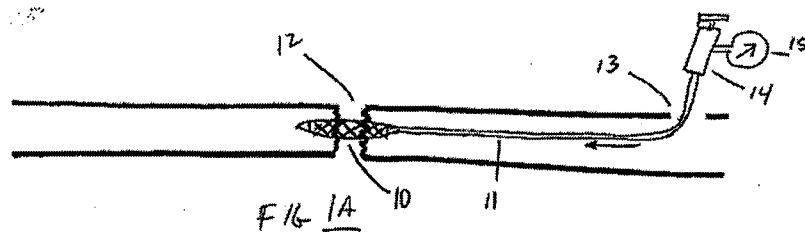


FIG. 1A

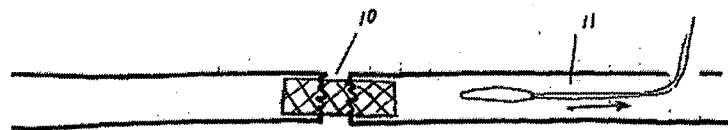


FIG. 1B

Amended Claim 1 recites, in part, “a means of expanding the device configured for removal from the bone upon expansion of the expandable device; whereby the expanded device mechanically is configured to fixate the fracture once the delivery catheter and the means of expanding the device are removed from the bone.” The “means of expanding the device” (11) is

a separate element from the expandable device (10). It is “configured for removal from the bone upon expansion of the expandable device.” In contrast, Beyar’s balloon 82 is the implant of Beyar’s disclosure. Beyar’s balloon 82 is not removable from the bone once it is filled with solidifying fluid.

Amended Claim 10 recites, in part, “removing the balloon from the bone; and hardening a substance within the bone segment after the removing the balloon step.” As discussed above, Beyar’s balloon 82 is the implant of Beyar’s disclosure. Beyar’s balloon 82 is not removable from the bone once it is filled with solidifying fluid. Beyar does not disclose, teach or suggest removing the integral balloon 82 from the bone as a step in Beyar’s invention as it is a critical element of Beyar’s implanted device.

Amended Claim 16 recites, in part, “the balloon is configured to be removed leaving the expanded tubular device in place to span bone segments.” As discussed above, Beyar’s balloon 82 is the implant of Beyar’s disclosure. Beyar’s balloon 82 is not removable from the bone once it is filled with solidifying fluid.

Accordingly, at least independent Claims 1, 10 and 16 and their dependent claims are allowable over Beyar. Claims 16 and 17 have been amended to address the 112 second paragraph objections. Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejections based on Beyar. New claims 25 and 26 introduce no new matter and are allowable in light of arguments made with respect to Claim 10, as well as for features recited therein.

No Disclaimers or Disavowals

Although the present communication may include alterations to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, the Applicants are not conceding in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. The Applicants reserve the right to pursue at a later date any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that the Applicants have made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

Application No.: 09/733,775
Filing Date: December 8, 2000

Co-Pending Applications of Assignee

Applicant wishes to draw the Examiner's attention to the following co-pending application, which contains a known priority relationship to the present application.

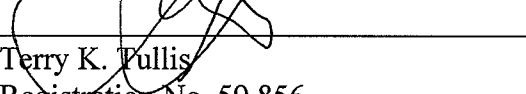
Serial Number	Title	Filed
12/011,115	METHOD AND DEVICES FOR THE TREATMENT OF NASAL SINUS DISORDERS	01/23/2008

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: 8-6-08

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